

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge
Week 3

Monday	Genesis 37-39	Psalm 13	Matthew 13
Tuesday	Genesis 40-42	Psalm 14	Matthew 14
Wednesday	Genesis 43-45	Psalm 15	Matthew 15
Thursday	Genesis 46-48	Psalm 16	Matthew 16
Friday	Genesis 49-50	Psalm 17	Matthew 17
Saturday	Exodus 1-3	Psalm 18.1-20	Matthew 18

Sunday: *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under “Adult Education, Bible Study”.*

The Genesis readings:

1. Refer back to the summary for Week 1 for general information on the origin and literary form of Genesis.
2. The balance of the readings in Genesis encountered this week comprise the story of Joseph and his brothers, and the deaths of Jacob and Joseph.
 - a. The story can be read at two levels. The first is the author’s search for origins in traditions that reach far back into Israel’s history. The second is the theological purpose that the story plays as part of the larger message of Genesis.
 - i. On the first level the story includes narrative combined from the J and E sources (*e.g.*, in ch. 37 the father is named both Israel and Jacob).
 1. At this level the story also parallels certain ancient Egyptian sources (which speak, *e.g.*, of seven fat years followed by seven lean years).
 - a. Further parallels can be noted. The story as a whole connects well to vague memories of the Hyksos period in Egypt (*ca.* 1750 to 1550 B.C.) when Semitic conquerors from Palestine ruled much of the northern part of the country.
 - ii. At a theological level we encounter that Joseph is attentive to God’s plan, which works differently from the course of human planners (*see, e.g.*, Joseph’s remarks at 45.5-8 and 50.20, and compare these with Prov. 16.9 and 19.21).
 1. Joseph’s speech and conduct reflect the ancient Wisdom traditions of the Near East, which are incorporated into Proverbs and Psalms.
3. Regardless of message and themes, the Joseph saga is above all remarkable for its dramatic intensity and integrity. Each step of the story builds upon what comes before.

The Exodus readings:

1. Exodus is the second of the five books of the law (*Torah*). The same factors in origin and literary form apply here as in Genesis.
 - a. The title derives from the Greek version of the Old Testament (the *Septuagint* or LXX), with the meaning being “going forth,” with the reference being, of course, to the Hebrews’ exodus from Egypt.
2. In the first three chapters of Exodus, we encounter the Hebrews captive in a foreign land, unmindful of the LORD’S promises to them, serving an alien king (chs. 1-2), and then learn of the LORD calling Moses (ch. 3).
 - a. God’s blessing to Abraham of progeny and land has become a threat to Pharaoh, who suppresses the Hebrews (in part by controlling their birth rate).
 - b. At 2.23-25 the people’s cry is described as coming to God. The LORD now becomes a character in the drama.
 - i. Pharaoh has acted as a “god” to the Hebrews. Now God will assert His sovereignty.
3. Moses raises two objections to his call: his own inadequacy, and that the people will not believe him.
 - a. God makes clear that He, the LORD, is in charge, and reveals His Holy Name.
 - i. The revelation of the Name is an assertion of authority.
 - ii. The Name is most often translated as I AM, but is, in fact, a Hebrew verb of the type (*qal imperfect*) that denotes continuous action begun in the past, and continuing.
 1. The English equivalent is, therefore, closer to I WAS, I AM, I WILL BE.
 2. When the Name LORD is spelled out in all capitals in an English Bible, this is the Name (the proper Name of God) made up of the four consonants YHWH.
 - a. In Jewish practice (and some Christian piety), the Name is never to be pronounced aloud. When encountered in reading it is read as the *title* “the Lord” (*adonai*).

The psalms: *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

1. Refer back to the Week 1 summary for general information on the literary form and theology of the Psalter.
2. The psalms encountered this week include:
 - a. 13: An individual lament.
 - b. 14: An individual lament. *Compare* Ps. 53 for a different version from another source.
 - i. The psalm reflects the Wisdom theme that one who ignores God is a fool.
 - c. 15: An entrance liturgy, used upon entering the Temple.
 - i. Justice includes being righteous in word (speaking) and action (walking/doing).
 - d. 16: A song of trust/confession of faith in the LORD alone. Vv.9-11 are quoted (from the LXX version, thus with slightly different language) at Acts. 2.25-31; 13.35.
 - e. 17: An individual lament. Traditionally this psalm has been thought of as a “psalm of vigil,” of one who spends the night in the Temple.
 - f. 18.1-20: A royal hymn of thanksgiving. Another version of this language is found at 2 Sam. 22.2-51.

- i. The deliverance vouchsafed the king (vv. 8-20) is a “theophany,” a revelation of the nature of God.

The Gospel readings:

1. The readings this week include parables of the Kingdom of heaven (13.1-52), and acknowledgment of Jesus by His disciples (13.52-17.27).
 - a. In ch. 18, Jesus teaches about community, and life in community as a necessary ingredient of faith.
2. The readings are filled with famous parables:
 - a. The Sower: (13.1-9, *explained* 13.18-23).
 - b. The Weeds among the Wheat (13.24-30)
 - c. The Treasure, the Pearl, the Dragnet (13.44-50).
3. The development of discipleship is described:
 - a. Jesus is rejected in His own country (13.53-58).
 - b. People respond to miracles (the walking on water; the feeding of the five thousand; healings; the feeding of the four thousand).
 - c. A foreigner (the Canaanite woman) has faith.
 - d. People demand a sign (even after miracles!) and Jesus warns about the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - i. The Pharisees were a group seeking holiness through observance of the Law. They were focused on the lawfulness of actions.
 - ii. The Sadducees were aligned with the Temple priesthood. They were focused on ritual sacrifice.
 - e. Jesus reveals Himself:
 - i. Peter is led by the Holy Spirit to confess Jesus as the Christ (16.13-20), and Jesus reveals that this confession has resulted from God’s guidance.
 - ii. Jesus is transfigured before select disciples.
 - f. Jesus teaches about community (ch. 18).